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1910

The Frozen Trail

A DRAMA IN FOUR ACTS

BY

GEORGE M. ROSENER

DICK & FITZGERALD

PUBLISHERS

18 Ann Street, New York

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THE FROZEN TRAIL

A Drama in Four Acts

By GEORGE M. ROSENER

AUTHOR OF COAST FOLKS, SLEEPY HOLLOW, IRISH EDEN, SHERIFF
OF TUCKAHOE, RELATIONS, ETC., ETC.

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THE FROZEN TRAIL.

CHARACTERS.

DR. JACK MOORE.....	<i>The road-agent</i>
CEDRIC RAND.....	<i>A wanderer</i>
TOM STARKIE.....	<i>A prospector</i>
JOE STARKIE.....	<i>His brother</i>
CAPT. WALKER.....	<i>A trapper and miner</i>
CROSS FOX.....	
HON. THOS. SEERS.....	<i>An ex-congressman</i>
BISHOP.....	<i>Rand's butler</i>
MRS. RAND.....	<i>Cedric's mother</i>
HELEN SEERS.....	<i>Daughter of Hon. Thos. Seers</i>
ALASKA.....	<i>Daughter of Cross Fox and proprietress of "The Last Chance."</i>

NOTE.—THOS. SEERS *can be doubled by JOE STARKIE, and BISHOP by CAPT. WALKER.*

TIME OF PLAYING.—*Two and one-half hours.*

SYNOPSIS.

Act I.—Interior of “The Last Chance,” Northern Alaska. CROSS FOX asleep. Arrival of JACK MOORE, a medical student. CAPT. WALKER recites to JACK the history of the road-agent, JACK O’DIAMONDS. Why JOE never made love to ALASKA. RAND saves TOM’s life and receives in return a sworn oath to reciprocate under any conceivable condition. CROSS FOX rifles JACK’s pockets. His attempt to show up JACK O’DIAMONDS foiled by ALASKA. CEDRIC’s love for ALASKA and ALASKA’s devotion to JACK.

Act II.—Same as Act I. Three months later. CROSS FOX’s inhumanity to JOE. Made to obey by TOM. JACK in the grip of fever becomes insane. For self-protection CAPT. WALKER fells JACK. RAND brings good news and learns of JACK’s love for ALASKA. The quarrel. The death of TOM attributed to JACK. Departure of JACK and CROSS FOX.

The Frozen Trail.

ACT III.—Home of MRS. RAND at Hastings, New York. Eighteen months later. MR. SEERS calls upon MRS. RAND. CEDRIC and HELEN visit the circus. TOM refers to CEDRIC having saved his life. MR. SEERS' ardent admiration of MRS. RAND. CEDRIC learns from ALASKA of her marriage to JACK MOORE. JACK accused by TOM as being responsible for JOE's death. ALASKA overhears the accusation and TOM's threat. RAND promises to save JACK, providing ALASKA agrees to certain conditions. TOM writes the letter of withdrawal. ALASKA's return. JACK at the door. The tell-tale cloak. JACK's anger. CROSS FOX again. He confesses to the murder of JOE. Death of CROSS FOX.

ACT IV.—Same as ACT III. A few days later. HELEN worried about her father. SEERS obtains CEDRIC's consent to the marriage. TOM and HELEN engaged. The duel. Final reconciliation.

CHARACTERISTICS, COSTUMES, ETC.

JACK MOORE. Just a man. Age about 30.

CEDRIC RAND. Another man. Age about the same.

TOM STARKIE. A man, a good fellow and a brother. Age about 25.

JOE STARKIE. Tom's weak and sickly brother. Age about 30.

CROSS FOX. An Indian. Age about 60.

THOS. SEERS. An ardent old wooer. Age about 55.

CAPT. WALKER. Trapper, miner, man. Age about 50.

BISHOP. Butler. Age about 35.

MRS. RAND. A mother and companion. Age about 50.

HELEN SEERS. A young girl of our day. Age about 20.

ALASKA. The daughter of a white mother and an Indian chief, the last of a noble race, possessing the virtues and good looks of the former combined with the pride and bearing of the latter. A combination of true womanhood, love and constancy.

All male characters in ACTS I and II wear colored woolen shirts, heavy vests, high lace boots, fur caps, mittens and mackinaws. CROSS FOX is dressed like others in addition he wears a bright piece of cloth about his forehead to hold back his long hair. He carries his cap and mittens all through the act in his pocket and wears them only when he exits to exterior. All male characters in ACT I carry revolvers and hunting knives with the exception of CROSS

Fox who carries a knife only. In ACT II they all show the strain they are under and the hardships they have undergone by the drawn and sallow expression of their faces and the neglected appearance of their hair and beards.

In ACT I ALASKA wears a medium length woolen skirt, a waist of the same material and a bow tie. Her boots are the same pattern as worn by the men. At her entrance she wears fur cap, mittens and mackinaw which she removes as soon as she is on the stage. In regard to make up for ALASKA it is well to bear in mind that she is a half breed and an ingenue make-up would be entirely out of the character.

In ACT III all characters are in evening dress with the exceptions of CROSS FOX whose costume is the same as ACT I and BISHOP who wears the regulation butler's livery.

In ACT IV all characters are in afternoon attire.

MOORE, RAND and TOM STARKIE should be played as straight strong men of will power and strong characters. TOM STARKIE has in his composition a dominant sense of humor and is played in the last two acts with a more or less light comedy air. JOE STARKIE must be played with infinite care. It is a character that can be easily overdone. He must appear to the audience as pathetic and manly, his will then be a beautiful and novel part. If overdone it at once becomes common place and uninteresting. Care also must be taken with MOORE in ACT II. Do not make him too declamatory or ranty at the beginning or the effect intended will be lost at the climax. An idea of the other characters is easily gained by reading the play.

All characters entering from the outside during ACT II are covered with snow.

At the opening of the door from the outside during ACTS I and II the wind effect becomes more distinct and dies off as the door closes. It is well to have one man stationed for this effect alone.

Another good effect when possible is to have the lights flicker when the door is opened and closed in ACTS I and II. This effect is gained by quickly raising and lowering the dimmers on both border and foot lights a few points.

During ACT I it is not snowing but ACT II takes place during a heavy snow storm. A very simple and effective piece of stage craft can here be worked by having the window set in lightly and have it rattle all during the act at various intervals.

During Acts I and II a novel piece of 'Business' can be worked. Have a strong black thread attached to the blankets and hides about the walls and when the door from the exterior is opened and closed these can be made to sway as if in the draught.

The above effects are given for the benefit of the producer should he desire to make an elaborate production. It will be found that the play goes excellently well without them, yet with their addition, which is easily obtained, the effect is bound to be startling and realistic.

At no time after CAPT. WALKER turns down the lamps in ACT I are the lights more than three-quarters up. During this and ACT II a semi dim atmosphere must be maintained, care must be taken that the scene is not too dim so as to kill the expression of the actors, an item often overlooked.

INCIDENTAL PROPERTIES.

ACT I.—Tobacco and papers for RAND, STRONG and FOX. Fountain pen for ALASKA. Revolvers and hunting knives for all characters. Knife only for CROSS FOX. Diamond Ring for MOORE. Mail bag containing several letters and newspapers for CROSS FOX. Newspaper on table to be torn to get lights from.

ACT II.—Photo. for JACK MOORE. Pack of cards for CROSS FOX. A tin filled with water for CROSS FOX. A bottle of carbolic acid for TOM. A roll of bandages for TOM. A bag of salt for all characters to be used as snow.

ACT III.—Match safe for RAND. Opera cloak for ALASKA. A lock and key on door L.

ACT IV.—A rose for SEERS. Two revolvers for MOORE. Gong to strike off stage for clock.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

As seen by a performer on the stage, facing the audience, R. means right hand, L., left hand of stage. C., center, R. C., right, L. C., left of center. D. L. C., D. R. C., doors in left center and right center of rear flat. D. L., D. R. doors in left and right flats. UP, means up stage toward rear. DOWN, down stage toward footlights.

THE FROZEN TRAIL.

ACT I.

SCENE.—Interior of “*The Last Chance*,” Northern Alaska. Winter night. A log interior. (If unobtainable, use a kitchen.) A long, low, frost-covered window L. A door R. leading to exterior, with snow-scape backing. Door R. C. and L. C. A bar about six feet long and four feet high runs along in front of the window; on it glasses, bottles, segar-boxes, etc., and over it a hanging lamp. Down L. is a fire-place, in it some logs and a red lantern for effect. In front of fire-place is a table with three chairs or stools and over it, also a hanging lamp. Down R. some old boxes and barrels. Right of R. D. are nails on which to hang hats, coats, etc. On nail nearest the door is a lighted lantern. On wall right, a lamp in a bracket. On all sides hang furs, skins, blankets, trophies, etc. Dark blue flood-lights back of flat. At rise of curtain lights are down. Wind effects. DISCOVERED CROSS Fox in front of fire-place, asleep. ENTER TOM D. L. C. crosses to D. R., buttons coat, puts on mittens and EXITS. CROSS Fox stirs, sits up, yawns and looks around. Wind effect. He shivers.

CROSS Fox. Ugh. Much cold. Soon big snow. (He lays down again and sleeps)

ENTER JACK MOORE D. R.

JACK MOORE. Hello here.

CAPT. WALKER. (off stage). What's wanted?

JACK. Rum and a bed.

CAPT. (off stage). Ah'll be thar in about a minute.

JACK. No hurry. Take your time.

ENTER JOE STARKIE D. R. coughs.

JACK. Hello, pard.

JOE STARKIE (coughs). Howdy.

JACK. Got a bad cold haven't you?

JOE (*sits on box R.*). Rotten. Say friend, what part of civilization did you drop from?

JACK. Civilization? (*Laughs*) Why I haven't seen civilization for five years. Why do you ask?

JOE. Because up here we don't say haven't, we just say ain't and let it go at that. That's why I figured you hadn't been long away from the land of paved trails. (*Coughs*)

JACK. Look here, friend, you want to do something for that cold.

JOE. Oh, forget it.

JACK. I'm putting you right, friend, and I know what I'm talking about. Back in civilization I was considered a fairly good doctor; in fact, half my pack now is made up of my medicine kit.

JOE. You will find little use for it up here.

JACK. Not much sickness up here, eh?

JOE. Men in these parts, friend, don't get sick only once and when they lay down with it they never get up. I'm the only example they ever had up here of a ten year fight for life.

JACK. Ten years?

JOE. Yep. That's a long time to fight for decent health ain't it? But I did it and you see it has beat me out. If I see next winter I'm doing well. (*Coughs*)

JACK. Oh come on. Don't say that.

ENTER CAPT. WALKER D. L. C.

JOE. Now don't pity me or I'll get sore. Come let's have a drink. (*They both go up to the bar as WALKER ENTERS.*)

CAPT. Ah'll do the honors, gents, seein' that Alaska ain't here. What'll she be. (*Goes behind the bar*)

JACK. What have you got?

CAPT. Rum.

JACK. That's mine.

JOE. Same here. Have something yourself, Capt?

CAPT. Thanks. (*Pours out three glasses of liquor*)

JOE. I don't think I got your name, friend.

JACK. Jack Moore.

JOE. This is Capt. Walker. (*JACK and CAPT. shake hands*)

JACK. Proud to know you.

CAPT. Same here. (*Holding up glass*) My regards, friends.

JACK and JOE (*together*). Drink hearty. (*They all drink. JOE pays*)

CAPT. By all huskies. It's sure tarnation dark in here. These lamps don't give no more light than a candle.

JOE. Need trimmin' maybe.

CAPT. Guess you've hit it. Wal Ah'll be sizzled; they ain't turned up that's the trouble. (*JACK and JOE both laugh*)

JACK. It's up to you, Capt., to set 'em up.

CAPT. And Ah'm just the hair-pin that can do that same. (*He goes about turning up the lamps and talking as he does so. As he turns up each lamp the lights on the stage come up*) Might Ah ask where yer bound fer stranger?

JACK. Just prospecting.

CAPT. Ain't yer regular line is it?

JACK. Well, not exactly. I was just telling our friend here that I am a doctor by profession.

CAPT. A doc. eh? Ain't you a little off yer trail up here?

JACK. Yes, you might look at it that way. You see, back in the states I thought I was in love with a certain young lady and when I saw I didn't have a ghost of a chance I did the fool thing and hit the trail for the wilderness. It took me about two days up here to realize that I was no more in love than a jack rabbit.

JOE. Same old yarn.

CAPT. It's funny now ain't it? About every white man up here that has come from the far South has got some kind of a story trailin' arter his team.

JOE. You're right, Capt. Many a man comes up here to forget the life he has left behind. The Injuns do well to call this particular part of the country "the land of forgotten pasts."

CAPT. What trail did you come in by, Mr. Moore?

JACK. I'll tell you if you call me Jack or Doc.

CAPT. Doc. goes.

JACK. I came up by the hog back trail.

CAPT. Yer don't say? And yer wasn't held up by Jack o' Diamonds.

JACK. Jack o' Diamonds? Never heard of the gentleman as far as I can remember. Who is he?

CAPT. Never heerd of Jack o' Diamonds? Get out. Get out.

JACK. No, that's on the level.

CAPT. If yer mean that then Ah'll have ter put yer wise.
Hey, Cross Fox. (CROSS FOX rises)

Fox. Ugh. What you want?

CAPT. Go down to Wicker's and see if the mail got in yet.

Fox. Ugh.

[EXIT D. R.]

JOE. Capt., you tell our friend the yarn and—(Coughs)
You'll excuse me Doc. won't you? I've got a letter to write
and the Lord knows when I'll feel like writing again.
(Crosses to D. R. C.)

JACK. Wait a minute. Have another drink before you
go.

JOE. Thanks, pard. But one is all I can stand at a time.
(Coughs) [EXIT D. R. C.]

JACK. That boy is in bad shape, Capt.

CAPT. You can bet he is. Been that way fer years.
Came up here with his brother ter kinder straighten out.

JACK. Has it helped him any?

CAPT. He's too far gone fer that Ah reckon. His brother
Tom takes care of him. Say it's wonderful what them two
boys think of each other. Tom looks arter him like he was
a baby and Alaska does the same.

JACK. Alaska? Who is that?

CAPT. Ah keep fergettin' that you're a stranger up here.
Alaska is the gal what runs this plant. She's the daughter
of old Cross Fox.

JACK. The Indian who just went after the mail?

CAPT. That's him. Him and Alaska is the last of what
was known as the Beothics, at one time the richest and most
learned lot of Injuns on the globe. The other Injuns about
here swear that the tribe has been cursed by the Great
Spirit and old medicine men predict that the last of the
race will be shunned by all mankind and left deserted and
alone. (He reads these last lines slowly and with emphasis)

JACK. And the girl Alaska?

CAPT. Will be the last of her race when Cross Fox goes.
You see Alaska's mother was a white woman and say, the
gal is white clear through. Lived a good part of her life in
a convent at Vancouver and has got the eddication of a
college professor.

JACK. What is she doing in this part of the world?

CAPT. The call of the wild I reckon. I tell yer, pardner,
when the fever of these snow covered hills gets in yer veins
and the north wind in yer nostrils, when yer get a longing
for the big snows and the northern lights, yer lost, cause it

makes no difference what part of the world yer in when yer hear the call of the wild yer've got ter come back; yer just can't help it.

JACK (*sits in chair L. of table*). I dare say you are right. What time did you say Alaska would be here?

CAPT. I didn't say, though she ought ter be here now. That is if she ain't been held up by Jack o' Diamonds.

JACK. Oh, yes, you were speaking of him. What is the yarn?

CAPT. (*sitting on the edge of the table*). There ain't anyone who knows much about him except that there is a reward of \$500 offered fer his capture. He's been doin' this hold up stunt now fer about five months.

JACK. Indeed?

CAPT. Yas. And a queer sort of a cuss he must be too. He never harmed a soul and never takes all that a man has got. He just helps hisself ter what a man has, gins the rest back and sends the victim on his way.

JACK (*laughs*). Well at that rate he doesn't do much harm then.

CAPT. No, that's just it, he's so damned tantalizing that the boys have decided to put a stop to it.

JACK. What kind of a looking individual is this fellow?

CAPT. Now that's whar we all stop. Nobody ever seed much moren his head and he always wears a mask. He allers works from behind a rock or a tree. The only one who ever got a good look at him is Alaska.

JACK (*eagerly*). Then this Alaska is the girl he held up on the Black River trail.

CAPT. Look here. Ah thought you said you knew nothin' about him.

JACK (*resuming his old careless manner*). I heard some traders at the post talk of some girl that was held up on the Black River trail and thought no more about it until just now. That is why I spoke so hastily. (*He takes out a handkerchief and mops his brow*)

CAPT. Warm stranger?

JACK (*takes off his coat and throws it over the back of his chair*). Yes, that fire throws out an awful heat. (CAPT. goes behind the bar. *Aside*) Phew. That was a close call. (Aloud to CAPT.) Let's have another drink. And say, why do they call this road agent Jack o' Diamonds.

CAPT. 'Cause he wears a large diamond ring on his left hand. Here try some of this stuff, it will make you feel like

an Easter Lily. (JACK laughs, tosses a coin on the bar, pours out some liquor and drinks)

JACK. That is good stuff and now if you don't mind I'd like to turn in for about forty winks.

CAPT. Sure. You'll find a bunk in there. (Points L.)

JACK. Well, me for the hay. [EXITS D. L. C.

CAPT. (calls off). That lower bunk to the right.

JACK (from off stage). This one?

CAPT. (same bus.). That's it.

JACK (same bus.). Oh, say.

CAPT. (same bus.). What is it?

JACK (same bus.). I left my pack and medicine kit over at the other cabin. Have them brought over and stored away will you?

CAPT. (same bus.). Sure.

JACK (same bus.). Thanks.

CAPT. (same bus.). Don't mention it. (To himself) Queer customer that. Ah wonder what he is really doing up here. Wal one man's business is all his own, Ah suppose.

ALASKA (from off stage). Hey up there.

CAPT. Hello, that sounds like Alaska.

ENTER JOE D. R. C.

JOE. Say, Capt. there's the gal comin' up the trail. You'd better give her some light.

ALASKA (same bus.). Hey up there.

CAPT. In a minute, in a minute. (JOE helps CAPT. on with his hat and coat. CAPT. snatches the lantern from the peg on the wall and EXITS D. R. JOE rolls a cigarette and lights it from the fireplace. During this business FOX ENTERS D. R. with the mail bag.)

FOX. Mail.

JOE. Throw it on the bar. (FOX throws the mail on the bar and EXITS D. R. JOE looks over the mail and then throws it down in disgust) Not a line for me. I guess the folks at home forgot that I'm alive.

ENTER CAPT. and ALASKA D. R.

CAPT. Here she be.

ALASKA. Hello, Joe.

JOE. Howdy, Lask. Where have you been?

ALASKA. Down to the dance at the Nugget.

JOE. Have a good time?

ALASKA. You bet.

JOE. I'm glad of that. Say, Lask. Lend me your fountain pen will yer?

ALASKA. Sure. (*Goes behind the bar to get pen*)

CAPT. Ain't yer got that letter writ yet Joe?

JOE. Haven't started yet.

ALASKA (*handing Joe the pen*). Writing to your best girl, Joe?

JOE. Yep.

ALASKA. What's her name?

JOE. Same as mine.

CAPT. Yer don't say?

JOE. Yes. She's my mother.

CAPT. Of course every man's best gal is his mother when he has one. But what we mean is yer real gal. Yer spark, so ter speak.

JOE. Now there's something I never did have.

ALASKA. Maybe you never tried.

JOE. Yes and maybe I never found one that would just suit.

ALASKA. It's lucky for you, Joe, that I am not a dashing young damsel or I would have you and the rest of this camp killing each other for love of me.

JOE. I guess they would do that now if you said the word. Say gal, the Romeos around this camp can get down on their knees every night and give thanks that I have not got my health.

ALASKA. Why?

JOE. Why? Why if I was strong like some of these huskies I'd a married you long ago.

ALASKA (*laughs*). Suppose I couldn't see it that way?

JOE. Oh that be hanged. I'd married you whether you wanted to or not. [EXIT D. R. C.

ALASKA (*looking after him*). Do you know, Capt., I like to hear a man talk like that.

CAPT. The Lord help us. What is women folks comin' to?

RAND (*off stage*). Hello up there.

ALASKA. That's Rand's voice.

CAPT. Ah'll open the door so as ter give him some light. (*Throws open the door and calls off*) Can you see?

RAND. All O. K.

CAPT. Great Scott. He's carrying some one on his back. Hello! Thar must have been some trouble.

ENTER RAND D. R. *carrying TOM on his shoulder. He comes down C.*

RAND. A blanket and some whiskey. Quick. (ALASKA gets a glass of whiskey, CAPT. gets a robe or blanket from the wall which he spreads on the floor. RAND lays TOM on the blanket)

ALASKA. Is he badly hurt?

RAND. I can't tell yet. (ALASKA kneels at his head and gives him whiskey. RAND is behind him. CAPT. at his feet)

CAPT. How did it happen?

RAND. He must have slipped on the ice and turned his ankle. I found him stretched out as I came up the trail.

CAPT. He hit his head as he fell, Ah reckon.

RAND. He don't seem to be frostbitten anywhere.

CAPT. Not a bit; you must have come across him a few minutes arter he went down.

ALASKA. See he's coming around all right. (TOM comes to with a start and tries to sit up. RAND prevents him)

RAND. Lay still, old man. You'll be all right in a minute. Take another drink. (TOM takes another sip of the whiskey)

TOM. I think I can stand now. (He tries to stand and winces when he attempts to stand on his injured foot) Guess I hurt that foot some.

CAPT. Wal Ah reckon. (CAPT. and RAND support him under either arm)

TOM. What happened to me anyhow?

CAPT. Slipped and fell on the ice.

TOM. How did I get here?

CAPT. Rand carried you.

TOM. Then I owe my life to you Rand. I don't know how I am ever going to thank you, old man.

RAND. Don't say another word about it and that will be thanks enough.

TOM. That don't go at all, pal. (Holds out his hand which RAND takes) Rand, if the day should ever come when I can do you a good turn promise me you will ask it no matter what it might be.

RAND. Oh, that's all right.

TOM. No, it is not all right. I want you to promise.

RAND. Well then I promise.

TOM (grips him more firmly by the hand). Thanks, old man, thanks. And now if you fellows will give me a lift I

will get between the blankets. (TOM and CAPT. help him to D. R. C.)

CAPT. Take it easy now. Take it easy (When they get to the door CAPT. EXITS with TOM, and RAND turns and faces ALASKA who is about to follow them.)

RAND. Wait a minute, Alaska, I want to speak to you.

ALASKA. Not now, Ced. I want to get some extra blankets for TOM. (She EXITS quickly D. R. C. RAND stands for a moment looking after her, then comes down to the fire, rolls a cigarette and smokes)

ENTER CAPT. D. R. C.

CAPT. Ah left him to the tender mercies of Alaska and his brother. Them two should be able to bring him around, Ah reckon. By the great ducks of the great horn, Ah most fergot.

RAND. What's the matter?

CAPT. A stranger blew into camp to-night who said he was a doctor. Wouldn't he be the man to look at Tom?

RAND. Where is he?

CAPT. In one of the bunks.

RAND. Come on, we will get him.

[EXIT D. L. C.]

ENTER FOX D. R. He comes down and is about to rifle JACK's coat which is left on chair L. He hears RAND, CAPT. and JACK talking off L. and quickly darts behind the bar just as CAPT. and RAND ENTER, dragging JACK between them.

JACK. Hold on, what's all this about?

RAND. We want you to look at a man who—

CAPT. Sure. Don't you see we have been drumming up trade for yer.

JACK. Wait until I am awake will you?

CAPT. Come on, this is important. We'll explain it all later. (CAPT. and RAND drag JACK off D. R. C. JACK is protesting ad. lib. all the way off. After they EXIT FOX comes down and rifles JACK's coat. He finds a diamond ring in the pocket and starts)

FOX. Ugh. Ugh. Big light. Diamond. Ah! Stranger him Jack Diamon. Me get heap gold now. Me tell. Me find big hold-up man. Me leave big light in pocket. That sure sign. Ugh, Cross FOX him no fool. (He drops the ring back in the pocket and continues his search)

ENTER JOE D. R. C.

JOE. Up to your old tricks eh?

FOX (*starts and drops the coat on the floor*). Ugh. My business.

JOE. Robbing a stranger eh? Well, that's about as low a trick as you put over yet.

FOX. Me say my business.

JOE. Yes your business is to steal everything you can lay your hands on.

FOX. Me Laska's father.

JOE. I know that and you cause her trouble and sorrow enough poor kid. It's the fact that you are her father that keeps the boys from stringing you up.

FOX. You talk like fool.

JOE. You're not worth wasting breath on. (*He crosses L. picks up coat and lays it on the back of chair. As he does so Fox draws a knife and attempts to stab him. Joe turns quickly and with his open hand strikes Fox who drops the knife and falls. While he is on the floor he springs for the knife which Joe puts his foot on*) Well you miserable redskin, I've got half a mind to send you to the Happy Hunting Grounds with your boots on.

ENTER CAPT. D. L. C.

CAPT. Hello. What's this?

JOE. I found him going through the stranger's pockets and he tried to knife me.

CAPT. Well you sneakin', greasy, stealin', murderin', cyotin', yaller, black hearted, horse eatin' Injun. You make yerself scarce afore Ah fill yer so full of lead that yer'll look like a crazy quilt. (FOX rises and goes up to D. R.)

FOX. Me go. (*Points to JOE*) You hit Cross Fox, Cross Fox him chief. Him no forget. Some day him kill. Him see you die. Him laugh. Soon me have much gold. Then me rich. Me find, me know Jack Diamond. Then me kill you. Me swear by Great Spirit. [EXIT D. R.

CAPT. What's he talking about?

JOE. Search me.

CAPT. He's full of fire water Ah reckon. Take ma advice and keep yer eye on that ar segar store sign. He'll do fer yer if he gets the chance.

JOE. I'll take your advice but I won't lose any sleep over it.

CAPT. Wal keep yer weather eye on him, that's all Ah've got ter say. You struck him and that's about as big an insult as yer could have offered him, as his tribe reckons.

JOE. Oh, stop preaching.

CAPT. You youngsters never will listen until it is too late.

JOE (*takes him by the arm and pulls him L.*). Come on you old bear I'll beat you at any game of cards you can think up.

CAPT. Wal have it yer own way. [EXIT D. L. C. *talking*.

ENTER RAND D. R. C. *Crosses to table, sits and for a moment looks towards D. L. C.*

RAND. I must have been mistaken. Yet when she looked at him I thought she went pale and trembled a little. Bah! I'm a fool. (*He stares at the floor as if in meditation*)

ENTER ALASKA D. R. C., *looking off*.

ALASKA. Why has he come here? Here, where if they knew who he was his life would not be worth a minute's consideration. (*She turns—sees RAND and starts*) Hello, Ced.

RAND (*with his eyes still on the floor*). Hello, girl.

ALASKA. Thinking, Ced?

RAND (*same bus.*). Yes.

ALASKA. What about?

RAND (*looking up*). About—

ALASKA. About me. You needn't say it. I know. (*Laughs lightly*) Am I right?

RAND. Yes.

ALASKA. Funny how I guessed it, eh?

RAND. I'm always thinking of you, Alaska.

ALASKA. I'm sorry for that.

RAND. Why?

ALASKA. Because you don't find something better to occupy your mind.

RAND. I'm a fool I guess.

ALASKA. No, Ced, you are far from that. You are a true man, how good and true no one knows better than I. (*She leans against the front of the table. RAND takes one of her hands in his*)

RAND. Then why can't you love me, Alaska?

ALASKA. Ah, please don't speak of that again, Ced. You promised me you wouldn't, you know.

RAND. Hear me just this once girl.

ALASKA. Why must you make yourself unhappy and me miserable by speaking of love? You know—I've told you before that—that—Ah don't, Ced, please don't.

RAND. Alaska even the unhappiness I endure by having you say my hope is but a false one, has a certain amount of bitter sweet in it that I wouldn't exchange for all the gold in these hills.

ALASKA. Ced. you make me feel awful bad, honest you do.

RAND. Why?

ALASKA. Because I want to keep you as a friend and I know you will not be satisfied with that. Ah, can't you see what you are doing?

RAND. I only know I love you.

ALASKA. And I—

RAND. Don't say you love some one else. Don't even think it. For as true as I love you I'd hunt that man out even if the trail led me to the other end of the earth and I'd kill him. Do you hear, I'd kill him.

ALASKA. Ced. you have no right to speak to me like this.

RAND. I have as much right as any other man. (*He grasps her fiercely by the wrist*)

ALASKA. Ced—Ced, you're hurting me.

RAND. Forgive me, I—I—didn't mean to.

ENTER Fox *hurriedly* D. R.

Fox. Here, here. Me find Diamond Jack.

RAND. What's that?

ALASKA. He lies—He lies. Can't you see he has been drinking.

RAND. Hey, boys, here all of you.

ENTER *all but Tom.*

CAPT. What's the row?

RAND. Cross Fox says he has found Jack o' Diamonds. (*They crowd around CROSS FOX, all but ALASKA who remains down L. by JACK'S coat*)

ALL. Where is he? How do you know you have your man? Are you sure, etc?

CAPT. Hold on here a minute, I will question him. Now first, how do you know you have your man?

Fox. Me find big light in pocket. (*ALASKA looks toward JACK'S coat, puts her hand in the pocket, takes out diamond ring and quickly puts it in her stocking. The other characters are so engrossed in FOX'S story they do not see this*)

CAPT. So far good. Now where is your man?

FOX. Me want money.

CAPT. You'll get your money. Where is your man?

Fox (points to JACK). Him. (JACK starts and reaches for his gun. RAND covers him with his own)

RAND. Hold on stranger. Stand pat. We want to see this thing through. (ALASKA goes up stage and down R.)

CAPT. Where did you find the diamond ring?

FOX. In coat pocket there.

CAPT. Joe, search that coat. (JOE crosses, takes up coat and searches it) Well!

JOE. There ain't even a toothpick in it.

ALASKA (laughs). I thought so.

CAPT. Well we sure are a fine set of durn fools fer listenin' ter such a yarn. Stranger we ask yer pardon.

JACK. Say no more about it.

CAPT. Well, Cross Fox, what have you got to say fer yerself?

Fox (crosses to ALASKA and looks her straight in the eye). Me understand. (He goes up to D. R.)

CAPT. Wal what do yer mean by that?

FOX. Me understand. Me say no more. [EXIT D. R.

CAPT. Darned if he ain't the most mysterious cuss Ah ever seed. (They all laugh)

JOE. Ain't it time to turn in, boys?

CAPT. Wal Ah reckon.

ALASKA. Never mind the lights, boys. I'll turn them out.

CAPT. Wal me fer the elk hides. Good-night, boys. (All bid each other good-night, etc., ad. lib.) You'll find an extra bunk, stranger, over in the other cabin.

JACK. All right, friend. Good-night. [EXIT D. R. (CAPT. and RAND EXIT L. and JOE EXIT R. ALASKA turns down all the lamps humming as she does so, some old tune; she leaves the lamp over the bar for the last. This she does not turn down. The lights are now low, she leans on the bar as if listening, the D. R. slowly opens and JACK ENTERS. The following is spoken in a low subdued tone)

ALASKA. Why have you come back? You don't know what risk you run. Why have you come here at all?

JACK. You know because I love you. Since that day we met on the Black River trail I have visited every camp in search of you.

ALASKA. If they once learn that you are the Road Agent—

JACK. I gave that all up from the first day I saw you. I

never followed the road as an agent because I needed the money. It was because I didn't care what became of me, but now I do care. I know every man from whom I have taken gold and I'll give it back to them, every ounce of it, if you will only say "I love you."

ALASKA (*as if dazed*). I—I—

JACK. We will go back to God's country, I will make a home for you and we will be happy. You don't love any one else?

ALASKA. No—NO—

JACK. You saved my life to-night, Alaska, it is yours. Just say those three little words and—

ALASKA. I leave for Vancouver to-morrow. I can't stay up here during the long winter, it is too long and lonesome.

JACK. Then we will go together.

ALASKA. No, you stay here, give back the gold you have taken and when the thaw comes again you can meet me—

JACK. Where?

ALASKA. At Vancouver in the convent where I lived as a child.

JACK. I'll do it. Alaska, I love you. (*He takes her in his arms as they stand beneath the lamp that hangs over the bar*)

ALASKA. Better than the world—Better than my life. I—love—you.

SLOW CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*Same as Act I. In addition a set of sleeping bunks, three high, in place of bar, and another set down R. An axe leans against the bunks R. A tin basin on floor near fire-place. The whole set is somewhat more dilapidated than in previous act. At rise lights are semi-dim. Wind and snow effect without. DISCOVERED Joe asleep in lower bunk up against the back of wall, and Cross Fox seated in front of the fire-place playing with a pack of greasy cards. Joe rises to a sitting position and coughs. It seems an effort for him to speak.*

JOE. Fox.

Fox (*without looking up*). Ugh!

JOE. Fox.

Fox. What you want?

JOE. Get me some water will you? I'm burning up.

Fox. Ugh!

JOE. Get me some— (*He falls back exhausted. Fox rises and goes up to the bunk*)

Fox. Ugh! You soon die—soon you get white—you get cold—you no strong, you like sick squaw—me glad—me much happy. Ugh! me no get water. Long moons go on you hit Cross Fox. Him no forget. Him swear him kill you. Him will. (*JOE coughs*) See you no live long. Soon me kill you.

JOE. You can't frighten me with your threats. Look here. I've got a gun on me and enough strength to use it. Why I think so little of you that I wouldn't waste good gunpowder on you. (*Coughs and again falls back*)

Fox. Me hate you like wolf. Ugh! see you sick, like sick she wolf. (*He goes back to his cards*)

ENTER TOM D. R. C.

TOM. Still here, Fox? How's the boy?

Fox. Don't know.

TOM. Poor Joe, I guess he ain't long for this world.

JOE. Is-is that you, Tom?

TOM. Yes, it's me, Joe. How do you feel?

JOE. I'm all in, I don't think I can hold out much longer.

TOM. Nonsense. You'll be all right as soon as we can get some meat.

JOE. Say, Tom. Make that redskin get me some water, he won't do it for me. Every time I ask him he starts to rave about what he's going to do for me when he gets the chance.

TOM. You look here, Fox. You get some water right now and any other time that this boy asks you. If he tells me again that you refused him I'll rid this outfit of your company. Do you understand that?

Fox. Ugh!

TOM. Well I mean it. Now get that water. (*Fox picks up the tin and EXITS D. R.*)

JOE. What time is it, Tom?

TOM. I don't know but I can find out for you, Joe.

JOE. No, never mind. It seems that there is no time up here. Neither day, month or year. Its all one, night, everlasting night. (*He becomes utterly exhausted*)

ENTER FOX D. R.

TOM. Joe—Joe. Quick, Fox, melt that snow. (Fox holds tin over the fire-place.)

ENTER WALKER D. R.

CAPT. What's up, Tom, has he had another bad turn?

TOM. Yes.

CAPT. Tough ain't it?

TOM. It's worse than that. How are things at the other hut.

CAPT. Bad—bad. Two down with the fever, one got blood poisoning and Stokes' arm was that bad Doc. Moore had ter amputate it. It's a wonder you didn't hear the poor devil yell away over here.

FOX. Here. (Hands tin of water to TOM and goes back to his cards)

TOM. Here you are, Joe. (He raises Joe and gives him a drink. JOE sighs as if relieved)

JOE. Thanks, I'm all O. K. now. (He lays back as if to sleep)

TOM. How do the rest of the boys manage to hold out, Capt?

CAPT. The Lord knows. They are starting to fight now among themselves. Doc. manages to keep them pretty full of dope and with only whiskey as rations it wouldn't surprise me if they all went stark mad and started in with a general massacre.

TOM. How's Jack himself?

CAPT. He's so doped and drunk, he's worse than all the rest put together.

TOM. Capt., how long do you suppose it will be before the relief can get here? That is if Rand really got through the storm.

CAPT. In forty-eight hours now at most. This snow can't last much longer.

TOM. Suppose—suppose they shouldn't come, what will we do?

CAPT. Don't say that boy, don't lose heart that way.

TOM. Capt., have you prayed?

CAPT. No, I wish I could. I never said a prayer in all my life. It would take a big load off my heart if I could turn to some one and ask for help and think that I stood a chance of getting it. No, Tom, I can only say, God help us, God help us, over and over and over again. Then Ah have ter stop cause Ah can feel maself going mad. (Tom takes CAPT. by

the shoulder and gently shakes him as if to wake him from the reverie in which he has lapsed)

TOM. Capt.—Capt. Don't take on like that or I will go under myself and we must keep a clear head for the sake of the other boys.

CAPT. You're right, *WE* must hold out. (*A half scream and half wild yell is heard off stage*)

TOM. What's that?

CAPT. Another poor devil in the grip of the fever Ah reckon. (*JACK rushes in D. R., laughing hysterically. He holds up his hand on which is a long cut*) Doc. What is it? What's the matter?

JACK. Matter—matter. Look at this. (*Holds out his hand*) Stetson did that with his hunting knife. Well, why do you stare at me? Don't you understand Stetson did it? He did it for a joke. Stetson did it—Stetson did it. (*He examines his hand in a dazed and fever mad manner*)

CAPT. (*aside to TOM*). Go over to his medicine chest and get some carbolic and bandages. I've got to fix that hand. (*EXIT TOM D. R.* CAPT. *speaks to JACK*) Come on Doc. Don't let a little thing like that worry you. Get up in that bunk and Ah'll dress your hand.

JACK. Eh. You'll dress my hand? No, you won't. (*Crosses to bunks R.*) I'm going to see Stetson first, he marked me and I won't forget it. I'm going to get even.

CAPT. There's a good feller. Get on that bunk now.

JACK. I won't, I tell you.

CAPT. Oh, come on, Doc.

JACK. No. I'm going to see Stetson first. I'm going to kill him for this. (*He starts for D. R.* CAPT. *holds him by the shoulders*)

CAPT. Hold on a minute, Doc.

JACK. Let me go. Do you hear? Let me go.

CAPT. Wait a minute, I want to talk with you.

JACK. Who's doctor here, you or I?

CAPT. You are. But you don't leave here until Ah dress that arm just the same.

JACK (*pleading*). Let me go Capt. Please let me go. (*TOM ENTERS D. R. with carbolic and bandages, he pours some of the carbolic in the tin from which JOE drank*)

CAPT. Ah'll let you go, Doc. if you let me dress that hand.

JACK. You don't touch this hand until I've seen Stetson. He cut me and now I'm going to cut him up and feed him to the dog teams. (*Starts for D. R.* CAPT. *blocks the way*)

JACK (*quickly turns to bunk and picks up the axe*). Stand out of my way or I will have your life to answer for as well as his.

TOM (*aside to CAPT.*). Watch him, Capt.

CAPT. (*aside to Tom*). Get behind him if yer can, he's going mad. (*To Doc.*) You're right Doc. Kill him, that's what he deserves. (*Coming slowly down toward Doc.*) Hello, yer dropped a picture of the girl thar, Jack.

JACK. Eh. What girl?

CAPT. Why, Alaska of course.

JACK. Alaska—where?

CAPT. Thar behind yer. (*JACK lowers the axe and turns to look behind him, as he does so CAPT. strikes him with his clenched fist. JACK falls to floor*) Ah hated to do that but it was the only way to keep him from going stark raving mad and murderin' someone. Ah've seen him do the same thing with some of the other boys when the fever got them. Here, Tom, lend a hand. (*TOM and CAPT. place JACK on bunk R., gets bandages, etc., and CAPT. washes and dresses JACK's hand*)

TOM. How did you know he had a picture of Alaska, Capt.

CAPT. Ah caught him lookin' at it the other day when he thought no one was about.

TOM. I wouldn't say anything to Rand about it if I were you.

CAPT. You know me, boy.

TOM. It must be that Alaska is in love with him, eh.

CAPT. Looks that-a-way.

TOM. And she's turned Rand down.

CAPT. Likely.

TOM. That'll hit Rand kinder hard.

CAPT. Yes, and we can do him no bigger favor than ter keep our ideas quiet. He'll find it out for himself when the thaw comes. If he knew it now with all the other things he's got to bear he'd be a dead man or a loon in less than an hour.

TOM. Then mum's the word.

CAPT. Right.

TOM. There's my hand on it.

CAPT. And thar's mine. (*TOM and CAPT. shakes hand*) Ah guess Doc is all right now for a spell. He's sleepin' like a log. Reckon Ah'll look in over at the other hut.

JOE (*sits up*). Tom.

Tom. What is it Joe?

JOE. Tom am I going to die?

TOM. We all are some time.

JOE. I mean now, within a few days. I am. I can read it in your face. You can't hide it from me, old man. This old world has never even given me a fighting chance, but I hate to leave it just the same.

Tom. Pshaw, Joe, you're all right.

JOE (*smiling faintly*). Still trying to cheer me up, eh, pal? I'll call you pal because you've always been that to me. A pal, a good friend and a brother. When you get back home again, Tom, tell mother that I often thought of her and loved her. Won't you?

Tom. Don't talk like a schoolgirl. It won't be many more moons before you will be able to give mother that message yourself. Now try and get some rest, old man, you've talked enough for one night. (*JOE lays back as if to sleep. Tom takes one of his hands in both his own*) Poor Joe. The best brother a man ever had. (*EXITS slowly*)

D. R. CROSS FOX who has stoically been playing cards throughout all the preceding scenes rises, goes to bunks up stage and pulls down a blanket which he lays before fire place. He takes out a flask of whiskey which he drains at a gulp)

Fox. Ugh—Fire water good. Ugh—make Injun sleep. Me fool paleface. Me have much fire water. Me Fox—Ugh! Cross Fox. (*He rolls himself up in a blanket, chanting some Indian song meanwhile. He lays down and sleeps. There is a short pause while the wind rages without. Then some wild hearty cheers are heard without*)

ENTER Tom hurriedly D. R.

Tom. Joe—Joe.

JOE (*rising*). What is it?

Tom. Rand just got in. And the relief will be here in a few hours. (*More cheers are heard without*)

ENTER RAND D. R.

RAND. Tom, have some of the boys go down the trail and meet the relief so as to lend a hand.

Tom. You bet I will. [EXIT D. R.

RAND. Well, Joe, old man. How are you?

JOE. Rotten, thanks.

Tom (*off stage*). Here, some of you fellows get the dogs

together and hike down the trail and give the relief a hand.
(Cheers are again heard off)

JOE. Sounds good. Don't it?

RAND. You bet it does.

JOE. I think I can rest now that I know the bunch are all right. (He lays back on his bunk. More cheers off stage. JACK raises slowly from his bunk. He is still in the grip of the fever)

JACK. What the devil is all that yelling about? Hello, Rand. Got back, eh?

RAND. Is that you, Doc? I didn't notice that you was here. Heard the news?

JACK. No.

RAND. The relief will be here in a few hours and maybe in a few minutes.

JACK. I don't believe it.

RAND (surprised). You don't—What's the matter, Doc., are you sick or—

JACK. Sick. (Laughs hysterically)

RAND. Come old man, you'd better get back to sleep.

JACK. Sleep? I don't dare to sleep. If I do I dream oh such dreams. Rand back there where the world lives, is a girl, the one girl. You know what I mean.

RAND. I know what you mean, Jack. Do you know what made me push through and get word to the outside world that these men up here were dying of privations? A woman. Do you know what has kept me alive on the trail for days and days? A woman. Her name has been my one prayer, her face my idol and my love the temple in which I worship her.

JACK. Does she love you like that?

RAND. Sometimes I think I have some sort of a show and then again—Love me? I wonder—I wonder.

JACK. You don't know?

RAND. No, but I will when I get back to the world. One day she said she would give me my answer when she learned the meaning of the word love. And she has. Because I've called it to her over these dreary miles of waste and I know she must have heard me because—

JACK. What is her name?

RAND. I'd rather not tell you that.

JACK. Oh. (He takes a photo from his coat and looks at it)

RAND. Her picture, Doc?

JACK. Yes, would you like to see it?

RAND. If you will. (*He takes the picture—looks at it—his hand trembles and he drops the picture to the floor*)

JACK. What do you think of it?

RAND. I think you lie.

JACK. What?

RAND. I said I think you lie.

JACK. Are you drunk or mad like the rest of this outfit.

RAND (*speaks slowly and with emotion*). I hope I am. I hope I will awake to find this all some horrible dream. Doc. tell me you were joking with me. Tell me that you do not love Alaska and that she does not love you.

JACK. Why should I, eh?

RAND. If you value your life, Doc., say it, say it.

JACK. Why? Tell me why.

RAND. Because she is the woman I love.

JACK. You?

RAND. Yes, me. Now tell me has she ever said that she loved you?

JACK. Yes.

RAND. Are you sure?

JACK. As sure as I can read in your eyes that you love her.

RAND (*picks up ALASKA'S picture*). You wasn't on the square Alaska. You wasn't on the square.

JACK. And why don't you take it like a man?

RAND. A man? For the first time in my life I am sorry that I am a man.

JACK. I won her didn't I? I won her fair and square. What right have you to think you even had a chance?

RAND. What right? Why you—you—Don't Jack. Don't make me forget that you are down with the fever. Remember we are not out of all this yet.

JACK. Then why don't you murder me? (*RAND starts*) That went home didn't it? Oh I know what you're thinking about. You think that I am going to die like the rest of this outfit, you think I am mad and don't know what I'm talking about. My stomach's gone, my brain is gone but I am not mad. It is you who are mad, drunk and crazy. It was I who taught her love. And you, you fool, thought you had a chance. You see what she has done for you? She has ruined every day of your life, but she has made me. She is mine.

RAND. Man, have you no thought for your life?

JACK. No, No. My life is with her and this poor starving body is here, here in this accursed land of everlasting snow. Snow—snow, the very word is enough to make a man curse all that he holds dear. Night—Night—Snow—Snow—*(Laughs in wild hysteria)* Don't, Rand. Don't. Take your hand from my throat. Open that door. I want air—air or I'll die without ever seeing her again. Alaska—Alaska. *(He laughs and then changes to sobbing. He drops to sitting position beside of bunks R. and gradually sobs himself to sleep. RAND stands looking down at him. Outside the wind whistles. The door opens and slams in the wind. RAND goes up and fastens the door. He comes down and again looks at JACK)*

JACK *(moves and murmurs in his sleep)*. Alaska—Alaska.

RAND *(in intense whisper)* Alaska? Why should he have her? Why did he—We are alone up here. Alone. Why—should—he—have—her? *(Draws his revolver)* It would only take a minute and all that life holds dear would be mine. *(He goes up stage and sees that JOE is asleep and repeats same business with CROSS FOX.)* No one would ever know. He is mad and suicide would be the verdict. *(Wind effect)* How the wind howls to-night. It seems to say "Go on, Go on." I will. *(He cocks the revolver and is about to fire when the full realization of his intended act comes to him. He looks at ALASKA's picture which he still holds in his hand.)* Alaska—My God. *(He rushes up stage and out of D. R. He leaves the door open behind him. Fox stirs, rises and closes the door. He stands with his back against the door as if in thought. He then comes down and looks at JOE)*

Fox. Ugh. Now me kill white wolf. Me steal dogs. Me take him *(Points to JACK)* back to Alaska. *(He staggers)* Ugh. Me much sick. Much fire water. Ugh.

JOE *(awaking from sleep)*. Tom—Tom. *(Fox crouches beside bunks up stage. JOE gets up from the bunk and crosses to the fire-place)* Lor', how cold it is. *(He warms his hands at the fire-place. Fox noiselessly creeps down to JACK and takes knife from JACK's belt. He then moves slowly toward JOE who has his back turned. He throws one arm under JOE's chin and around his throat and with the other he stabs him in the back. There is no struggle. He holds this position for a few seconds and then drops JOE to the floor. He drops the knife beside JOE, then crosses and shakes JACK roughly by the shoulder, then quickly goes up*

stage and again crouches beside the bunks. JACK slowly rises. He seems dazed. He notices JOE. He crosses to him, starts, turns him over and speaks in a whisper)

JACK. Joe dead. Can it be possible that I—I—No. No. Oh my head's in a turmoil. I can't think. I can't think. (Fox quietly comes down c.) How did my hand get bandaged. I must have been asleep. Perhaps I took an overdose of whiskey and morphia. (He shakes JOE as if he cannot realize that he is dead) Joe—Joe—who has done this?

FOX. You do it.

JACK. What do you mean?

FOX. You get much drunk. Much mad. You fight him. You kill him.

JACK. You lie, Cross Fox.

FOX. (points to knife). See knife. Him yours.

JACK. Did I have a touch of the fever, Cross Fox?

FOX. Ugh. You much sick. You kill. You laugh. Then cry like papoose. Then go sleep.

JACK. Do any of the boys know?

FOX. No.

JACK. I killed him. Me. Jack Moore a murderer. (To FOX) Why don't you speak, tell me what to do. Quick, I can feel the fever coming on again. Tell me what to do before it gets me. I know, I'll tell the boys and take my medicine. (He starts for the door. CROSS FOX blocks the way)

FOX. You fool they kill you quick. Wait.

JACK. Get away from that door.

FOX. You much fool. They kill you. You no see Laska.

JACK. Laska. I had forgotten.

FOX (points to JOE). Him dead. Him no live long any way. Him much sick. Outside is dogs and sleigh and meat. Me steal em. Me take you south to Laska. Me read stars. Me no get lost. Come.

JACK. No, I stay here.

FOX. Then you no see Laska. She love you like flower love sun. When you no come she die.

JACK. Alaska—Alaska. (FOX takes JACK by the hand and leads him up to D. R. JACK goes reluctantly, looking over his shoulder at JOE)

FOX. Come. Me make you much happy. Me make Laska much happy. (When they reach the door JACK breaks away from FOX and rushes back to JOE. He takes one of JOE's hands in his own)

JACK. Joe—Joe—You understand that I didn't mean it. It was the fever, Joe. Not me—Not me.

Fox (again leads him up to door. *Same bus.*). Laska she wait.

JACK (half dazed as if the fever was returning). Laska. Yes I must live to see her just once. It wasn't my fault, was it, Fox.

Fox. Not your fault him dead. I swear by Great Spirit. (He throws open the door. The wind rises. He leads JACK out. After they have gone the door opens and slams in the wind, the lights flicker in the draught, the furs and blankets about the walls sway back and forth.)

SLOW CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE.—*Home of Mrs. RAND, Hastings-on-the-Hudson, New York. Summer evening. An interior in a beautiful summer home. Doors R. and L. Door L. C., also double-door D. R. C. in rear flat, opening on a balcony with exterior backing. All other doors are backed by interiors. Both doors in rear flat are covered by heavy curtains. Window up L. Fire-place with mantel down R. Large clock and vase of cut flowers on mantel. A large easy-chair in front of fire-place. Fire effect in fire-place. Buffet between door and window. Bottle of brandy, glasses, cigars, seltzer, and fruit on buffet. A bell cord hangs alongside of buffet. R. of C. is a hard wood table. A fancy practical lamp and writing material are on table. L. of C. is a couch. Against wall down L. is a ladies' writing desk with chair and stationery, etc. on same. Rugs and carpet on floor. Bric-a-brac about stage. Dark blue flood-light back of double doors.*

At rise DISCOVERED Mrs. RAND asleep in chair by fire-place. The clock strikes ten. Mrs. RAND wakes with a start and looks up at clock on mantel.

MRS. RAND. Ten o'clock. Dear me, I have been asleep for an hour and I promised myself that I shouldn't doze for more than five minutes.

ENTER BISHOP D. L.

BISHOP. Mr. Seers is in the library ma'am. Will you see him?

MRS. RAND. Of course, Bishop. Show him up.

BISHOP. Very good, ma'am.

MRS. RAND (*arranging her hair before mirror on mantel*). Dear me I'm a perfect fright.

ENTER MR. SEERS, D. L.

MR. SEERS. My dear Mrs. Rand, do I intrude?

MRS. RAND. Not at all, Mr. Seers. I am indeed delighted to see you. Do you come from the circus?

SEERS. No I am from the club. My daughter is at the circus with Cedric and requested me to call for her here on my way home. I fear Mrs. Rand my day for indulging in wild west shows is long since past.

MRS. RAND. Your day Mr. Seers? Why your day has just begun, I fancy.

SEERS. Do you think so? Do you really think so? That is a compliment.

MRS. RAND. Will you not be seated? These young people are sure to be away another half hour at least.

SEERS (*sits L.*). Thank you.

MRS. RAND. Do you feel a draught? If so I will close the curtains. (*Goes up to D. R. C. and closes curtains*)

SEERS (*looking after her admiringly. Aside*). What a woman. What a charming woman. Every move a perfect picture.

MRS. RAND. Did you speak Mr. Seers?

SEERS (*confused*). Yes er—that is er—er—er—By the by. How long does your son intend to remain home this trip?

MRS. RAND. Goodness alone knows. He is as likely to be up and off to another quarter of the globe in a day as he is to remain home for a month or a year.

SEERS. A veritable globe trotter, eh?

MRS. RAND. Say wanderer and you have it. He gets it from his father. Since his return from school I don't believe that he has spent altogether two years at home.

SEERS. Ah yes. I dare say he will soon take that journey from which few return.

MRS. RAND (*startled*). Dear me. You mean death?

SERRS. My word no. I mean marriage.

MRS. RAND (*with a sigh of relief*). Oh.

SEERS. I am sorry Mrs. Rand if I have frightened you by my boorish speech.

MRS. RAND. I was somewhat startled I do admit.

SEERS. I am so sorry.

MRS. RAND. Pray say no more about it.

SEERS. Thank you. I will venture to say now, Mrs. Rand, that should your son marry you would be very lonesome.

MRS. RAND. Not more than I am now sometimes.

SEERS. You are?

MRS. RAND. Yes very often.

SEERS. I am glad of that.

MRS. RAND. I beg your pardon.

SEERS (*greatly confused*). No-no-no-no-no. I beg your pardon. What I meant to say was that I am glad to a—in—for seeing that you are—your son—our son—no-no-I-I-I-I-

MRS. RAND. Yes I think I understand, Mr. Seers.

SEERS. You do? Thank you. I am glad you do. (*Mops his forehead with his handkerchief*)

MRS. RAND. Isn't this warm weather we are having, Mr. Seers?

SEERS. Very. Very. Shocking weather. It's the humidity. It annoys me I do assure you.

MRS. RAND. What were you about to say before our conversation drifted to the weather, Mr. Seers?

SEERS. I was about to say and I trust you will pardon me for taking the liberty, that it wouldn't surprise me in the least to hear of your marrying again one of these days.

MRS. RAND. I, Mr. Seers?

SEERS. Yes. And why not? You are still young, why just see what is in favor of such an event. You are in the prime of life, you have good common sense, good sound judgment, you are gentle, careful, happy and bright of disposition, wise, motherly, loving, just, good natured, trustworthy, wifely, experienced, sincere, glorious, desirous, and—and—

MRS. RAND. Warranted not to bite and will stand without hitching.

SEERS. I was going it a bit strong, wasn't I? (*They both laugh*)

ENTER HELEN, *followed by Tom.*

HELEN. Well if here isn't Papa? Good evening Mrs. Rand.

MRS. RAND. Good evening, Helen. Did you have a good time?

HELEN. If drinking all kinds of lemonade and eating an equal amount of peanuts and popcorn while seeing a real wild west show from a wooden seat means a good time I had one with a vengeance. As usual I am forgetting my manners. Mrs. Rand allow me, Mr. Starkie. (MRS. RAND and TOM bow in acknowledgment of the introduction) And this, Mr. Starkie, is my father. (Same business) Mr. Starkie you know is the Mr. Starkie of whom we have heard Cedric speak so often.

MRS. RAND. Then I am doubly glad to see him.

TOM. Thank you.

SEERS. You were with Cedric in the north then, Mr. Starkie?

TOM. For two years and would have been there yet had it not been for him.

SEERS. I see. He prevailed upon you to come south.

TOM. He saved my life. Some time I should like to tell you the story.

SEERS. And I should be pleased to hear it. (Clock strikes one off stage) Ten-thirty, Helen, it is time we were getting home.

MRS. RAND. You are surely not going home without a glass of wine and a little lunch. I shall have it set out in the dining room. You will stop, Mr. Seers?

SEERS. Thank you.

MRS. RAND. And you, Mr. Starkie.

TOM. With pleasure.

MRS. RAND. You may all come down in fifteen minutes.

TOM. Oh I say. Let me help you. I'm quite a hand at getting lunches ready and all that sort of thing. Besides you cannot do it all yourself and you know the servants must have long since gone to bed.

MRS. RAND. Do you think you would be of assistance and not in the way?

TOM. Try me.

MRS. RAND. Then come along.

[EXIT D. L. followed by TOM.

SEERS. A glorious woman, Helen. Eh? What?

HELEN. I declare, Papa, you said that in such ardent tones that one would think you were in love with Mrs. Rand.

SEERS. In love. Poo-poo. Poo-poo.

HELEN. You may say Poo-poo. But I know the symptoms.

SEERS. Silence, young lady. Love is not a matter to jest with. It is a serious consideration I assure you.

HELEN. Yes, I know.

SEERS. You know, do you? How do you know?

HELEN. Oh I can't answer that. How does any girl know that she knows, that she knows that love is a serious consideration?

SEERS. It strikes me that young girls nowadays know far more than their mothers did at twice their ages.

HELEN. That's advancement, Papa.

SEERS. Stuff and nonsense I call it.

HELEN. Dear me, you old men—

SEERS. Old man—Old man. Who is an old man? Helen, I should be ashamed of myself to speak of my father as an old man.

HELEN. I'm sure I didn't mean it that way, Papa. (*She pats his face and caresses him.*) I am sure that you are younger by far than Major Tussel.

SEERS. Bah! That old fool is old enough to be my grandfather.

HELEN. And I can mention any number of ladies not much older than I am who would jump at a proposal should you offer one.

SEERS (*smiling and flattered*). Do you really think that? You flatter me.

HELEN. Indeed I do not.

SEERS. Enough of this nonsense. Tell me what excitement there was at the wild west show to-night.

HELEN. The real excitement, we didn't see.

SEERS. Indeed. And what was that?

HELEN. It seems that in the dressing room tent some of the Indians had been indulging in fire water and the result was a free for all fight in which some of the combatants were seriously hurt I am told.

SEERS. Terrible—terrible. These things should be better managed.

MRS. RAND (*appears d. l.*). Come, folks, the lunch is ready. [EXIT d. l.

HELEN. And I am ready for the lunch. Come, Papa.

[EXIT d. l.

SEERS (*goes up to D. L. and looks off*). What a woman! What a glorious woman!

[*EXIT D. L. shaking head and sighing with admiration.*

ENTER BISHOP D. L. *Stands a little up stage.* ENTER ALASKA *immediately after.*

ALASKA. Has Dr. Moore been here this evening, Bishop?

BISHOP. Not yet, ma'am.

ALASKA. I suppose Mrs. Rand has retired.

BISHOP. She is in the dining room. Shall I tell her you are here?

ALASKA. No, I will go to her.

BISHOP. Very good, ma'am.

ALASKA. Thank you, Bishop.

[*EXIT D. L.*

ENTER RAND D. L.

RAND. Good evening, Bishop.

BISHOP. Good evening, sir.

RAND. Mother retired?

BISHOP. Not yet, sir. She is having a luncheon with some callers.

RAND (*lighting segar at buffet*). Late callers, eh?

BISHOP. Rather, sir. Is there anything I can get for you, sir?

RAND. Nothing, thank you, Bishop.

BISHOP. Yes, sir. Very good, sir. (*Crosses and EXITS D. R. RAND now has his back toward D. L. ALASKA ENTERS D. L. with her back toward him. She is agitated. She speaks in subdued tones as if to herself.*) That was Tom Starkie's voice I heard, I could have sworn to it. And yet why should I fear to see him, I—

RAND (*turns, sees ALASKA and starts*). Alaska.

ALASKA (*turns and faces RAND*). Cedric.

RAND (*holds out his hand*). I am glad to see you Alaska. I knew we should meet again.

ALASKA (*takes his hand as one in a dream*). Why are you here?

RAND. This is my home.

ALASKA. You are the son of *this* Mrs. Rand?

RAND. I am. But you have not told me what you are doing here.

ALASKA. I am your mother's friend. You will forgive me for seeming dense but—

RAND. You thought I was dead, I understand. Well perhaps I should have been had all the boys up there been of the same stuff as Doc. Moore. You remember Doc. Moore.

ALASKA. He is my husband.

RAND. Your husband! *You are married then?*

ALASKA. Yes.

RAND (*sarcastically*). And to him.

ALASKA. Why do you use that tone?

RAND. You shall never know why from me.

ALASKA. You must tell me.

RAND. You will never know from me.

ALASKA. Why not?

RAND. Because from the last day I saw you up in that north country I have never ceased to love you as I loved you then.

ALASKA. You dare to say this now when you know that I am married.

RAND. I made a vow in that land of frozen trails that I would win you and your love by fair means or foul and I shall do it, Alaska.

ALASKA. Cedric, you had more honesty, honor and truth in that wild land of snow than you now possess in this country of advanced civilization. Up there you would not have thought of wounding me and insulting me as you have here. And this beneath your mother's roof.

RAND (*with bowed head*). I beg your pardon.

ALASKA. Come, let us forget the past. It is right as it is, we were not for each other. If I have ever caused you one moment's sorrow I regret it and ask your forgiveness. (*Pause*) Have you nothing to say to me?

RAND. Nothing save that I do not think you gave me a square chance to win your love and that I am not to be blamed if I sometime take an undue advantage to win that which I have lost.

ALASKA. You are right. I have not been altogether honest with you. The only excuse I can offer is the great love I bore and still bear my husband. Pardon me while I bid your mother good night. (*EXIT D. L. CEDRIC goes to D. R. C. and looks off as if in meditation.*)

ENTER Tom *hurriedly* D. L.

Tom. Hello, Ced. Say, I have a good one for you. As I came along the hall just now a lady passed me, it was so dark I could not see who it was, yet I sort of felt that it

was some one we both knew. Now who do you suppose I imagined it was?

RAND. I can guess that without a second trial.

TOM. Well, who was it?

RAND. Alaska.

TOM. Now how did you guess it?

RAND. Because it is she.

TOM. No, tell me on the square, Ced. How did you guess it?

RAND. I have told you.

TOM (*becoming serious*). You really mean that, Ced?

RAND. Upon my word. I just spoke to her.

TOM. Good Lord! How long have you known this?

RAND. Not many minutes longer than yourself. We have only just got back you know, Tom. It seems she is a friend of my mother's.

TOM. Was she surprised to see you?

RAND. As much as I was to see her.

TOM. It's strange she never associated your mother's name with you.

RAND. Perhaps she has, who knows, and if as she says that she really thought me dead it isn't likely that she would ever broach the subject to my mother.

TOM. Strange, isn't it?

RAND. And that's not all. She is married and I dare say living near by here.

TOM. Married, did she say to whom?

RAND (*RAND is about to tell him, then pauses*). No

ENTER JACK D. L. TOM is standing L. RAND R. As JACK enters he comes to c.

JACK. I beg you pardon gentlemen— (*RAND and TOM turn and look at him. They all start simultaneously*)

TOM. You needn't answer my last question, Rand. I can understand now who her husband is.

JACK. I hardly expected to find you gentlemen here. Though when I say I am pleased I know you will doubt me.

TOM. You are right. I for one do doubt you.

JACK. It would be useless then for me to offer you my hand.

TOM. As far as I am concerned it would be.

JACK (*crosses R. leaving RAND in c.*). Then I dare say Mr. Rand is of the same opinion.

TOM. Perhaps you are not aware, Mr. Moore, that I hold you responsible for my brother's death.

JACK. You do wrong to say that.

ENTER ALASKA D. L. *She conceals herself behind the curtains.*

TOM. I do wrong. I? You have the effrontery to say this to me? You, who murdered my brother for what reason God alone knows? You who left us all up there in the north frozen in, after first stealing the only dogs and sled there was to take us out? You say this to me? Had I been in your place Doc. Moore or Jack o' Diamonds whichever you prefer, while I was doing a life taking business I should have taken my own and done the world as great a service as a man of your composition could.

JACK. Mr. Starkie, I had no intention of killing your brother. And from the bottom of my heart, I regret that one action, which will cause me sorrow all through my life, without any hope of making amends. Up there in Alaska we were all mad more or less. I myself was on the verge of permanent insanity. The suffering up there was almost more than humanity could stand without being crushed. From the hour that I temporarily came out of my stupor to find that I struck your brother down, I knew no more until Cross Fox brought me back to civilization. What more can I say except to again offer you my hand and ask your forgiveness.

RAND (*with his hand on Tom's shoulder*). Take it, Tom. Let me have the pleasure of making this up between you two men who were at one time comrades and fellow sufferers.

TOM. My mind has been made up for some months past, Rand. You know the oath I took beside the body of my brother. Mr. Moore, I give you ample notice to see your attorney and make up a defense, for I shall do my best to have you tried and convicted of the murder of my brother, of which you know as well as we all do, that you are guilty.

JACK. I see it is altogether useless to say more than I have on a matter that is painful to us both. I thank you for your advice and will see my attorney and do all in my power to prove my innocence.

TOM (*goes up to D. L.*). I shall wire my attorneys to-night.

RAND. One moment, Tom. Let me again implore you to take his hand and call all this off. You can do the dead

no good and think of the harm you might do the living. It is I, your old friend, who asks it.

TOM. I am sorry, Cedric, but I must refuse.

RAND. Then as a last resort let me ask you to consider Alaska, his wife. She is very dear to him.

TOM (*very quietly*). My brother was very dear to me, no one knows that better than you do, Rand. Please say no more about it. Good-night.

RAND. You will be back again?

TOM. When he is gone. Yes. [EXIT D. L.

JACK (*crosses and holds out his hand which RAND takes*). I wish to thank you, Rand, for your kind words in my behalf. It was good of you. It was kind of you. Good-night. (*Crosses to D. L.*) You have seen Alaska?

RAND. Yes. She is looking remarkably well.

JACK. Thank you. Will you tell her when she has finished her chat with your mother that I am waiting below in the car.

RAND. Won't you come to the dining-room and—

JACK. You are very kind but I would rather not. I wish for a little air. My respects to your mother and good-night. [EXIT D. L.

RAND. Good night. (*Starts to exit D. L. and meets ALASKA who comes from behind the curtains.*) You have heard?

ALASKA (*coming down to couch*). Every word. What shall I do? How can I save him?

RAND. That I fear will be hard indeed.

ALASKA. Do you believe him guilty?

RAND. You must remember that I was there.

ALASKA. Why do you evade my question? You do not believe him guilty. Else why did you plead for him just now?

RAND. I did that for your sake.

ALASKA. Oh don't, don't say any more. Had I never known my husband, the tones of his voice as he related his sad story just now would have proven to me that he was innocent.

RAND. It will be hard to convince the jury on that ground.

ALASKA. Why are you so hard with me, Cedric, you above all men.

RAND. Because I alone have far more reason to feel differently than would other men.

ALASKA. I will see Tom. I will plead to him.

RAND. I did that for your sake just now and you heard his answer.

ALASKA. I had forgotten that. Oh, I must save him. I must save him and you, Cedric, shall help me.

RAND. I?

ALASKA. Yes. For the old love you cannot refuse me now.

RAND. Don't you understand that Tom is keeping an oath he made to his dead brother?

ALASKA. Yes, and he also made one to you the night you saved his life. Have you forgotten that?

RAND. I had until now.

ALASKA. Then hold him to it.

RAND. I will on one condition.

ALASKA. Ask it. Anything, anything.

RAND. You mean that?

ALASKA. Yes, yes. For your sake, Cedric, for mine, for the old love, save my husband.

RAND. Then I will get Tom to write a letter to your husband recalling all his intentions of having him arrested.

ALASKA. You will do that?

RAND. And the price—

ALASKA. And the price?

RAND. That you leave here with me for Europe to-night.

ALASKA. Is that what you meant?

RAND. Don't you see Alaska that this affair to-night has put a devil in me. I see my chance to win you at last and I am too weak to resist.

JACK (*off stage R.*). Are you soon coming, Alaska?

ALASKA. Yes, in a minute, dear.

JACK (*same business*). You are there then. I thought I heard your voice.

RAND (*he is on the stairs*). Come here to-night within an hour and I will have the letter. Will you come?

ALASKA (*struggles with herself for a moment*). Yes, go, go quickly. [*EXIT RAND D. L.*

ENTER JACK D. L.

JACK. I thought you were never coming.

ALASKA. I am ready now, Jack.

JACK. You look troubled Alaska and—Why, what is the matter, are you ill?

ALASKA. No, Jack, I just want to go home.

JACK. Then come, we shall leave at once.

ALASKA. You too look sad, dear. Are you?

JACK. Why should I be with such a wife to cheer me?

ALASKA. You are always kind.

JACK. Not half as much as I should be.

ALASKA. Jack, if ever in the past you—you—

JACK. Alaska, has Rand been speaking to you? Excuse me for my violence, I suppose you must know it some time and it is better coming from me than from some one else. Though I am innocent, Alaska, I swear that by what I hold dearest on earth, your love, I am innocent with no way of proving it.

ALASKA (*goes into his arms*). Jack, Jack, My husband.

JACK. Come, my love, we will go home and by our own fireside I will tell *you*, my comforter, the greatest sorrow of my life. Come. (*With his arm about her they start for D. L. Laughter is heard off stage*)

ENTER D. L. MRS. RAND, HELEN and SEERS.

MRS. RAND. Good evening, Doctor. Going so soon, Alaska?

ALASKA. Yes, I am very tired.

HELEN. And just when we were beginning to find out that we all knew each other and all had forgotten that we had ever met before we saw each other to-night.

SEERS. Helen, for nonsensical speeches, you excel.

ALASKA. Good night everybody.

OMNES. Good-night. [EXIT D. L. ALASKA and JACK.

SEERS. Come, Helen, we must be going. Good-night, Mrs. Rand.

MRS. RAND. Good-night, Mr. Seers. Good-night, Helen.

HELEN. Good-night. Do you know, Mrs. Rand, I was just thinking—

SEERS. For Heaven's sake, Helen, don't get started again I beg of you.

HELEN. Isn't that just like a man, Mrs. Rand? They always imagine a woman cannot say anything unless it takes an age to say it in.

SEERS. There she goes again with some of her nonsense. Helen you try to be epigrammatical and you succeed in being decidedly silly.

HELEN. I think I've said enough. Come on, Papa. Good night, Mrs. Rand. (*She takes SEERS by the arm and EXITS D. L. MRS. RAND laughingly calls good-night after them.*)

ENTER RAND D. L. C.

RAND. Hello, mother. All the folks gone?

MRS. RAND. Yes, Cedric.

RAND. And now I shall have to chase you off to bed. You must get your rest you know.

MRS. RAND. Cedric, I wish to ask you something.

RAND. Well, mother, what is it?

MRS. RAND. How long do you intend to remain home?

RAND. Why, as long as you wish me to.

MRS. RAND. You do not mean that.

RAND. No.

MRS. RAND. Why do you not marry, Cedric?

RAND (*laughs*). There must be two for that, mother.

MRS. RAND. I should think my life complete if you were married. Come tell your mother that she might hope. Is there some one who—

RAND. Mother.

MRS. RAND (*RAND takes her in his arms*). My boy.

RAND. Mother, there was some one once. But now—I—I don't know, mother.

MRS. RAND. Forgive me my boy. I'm just a foolish old lady. Good-night, my boy.

RAND (*kisses her*). Good-night, mother.

[EXIT MRS. RAND D. L.

ENTER TOM D. L.

TOM. They have gone?

RAND. They have. I suppose you did the foolish thing. Sent a hasty telegram which you will regret?

TOM. I'll never regret it.

RAND. Have a drink old man?

TOM. Thanks.

RAND (*mixes two high balls at buffet*). It's strange that we should run into these people to-night, isn't it?

TOM. It seems more like fate to me.

RAND. There is no such thing as fate to my way of thinking. If there is, it is the pitchfork on which the devil turns us poor mortals about. Here you are, pal. (*Hands him drink*)

TOM. Thanks. We little thought, Rand, up there in the north that we would ever be here in New York drinking high-balls.

RAND. This is a strange world, Tom. Here's how. (*They both drink*)

TOM. I should never have been here any way if you hadn't saved my life.

RAND. Pshaw.

TOM. It's the truth, Rand, and there's no getting away from it.

RAND. Do you remember the promise you gave me?

TOM. Indeed I do and I wish there was some big thing I could do to show you that I meant it.

ENTER BISHOP D. R., *crosses and* EXITS D. L.

RAND. Then I am going to hold you to that promise. Now listen, Tom. I want you to write a letter and give it to me.

TOM. A letter, is that all? Fire away. To whom?

RAND (*after a pause*). To Doc. Moore.

TOM. Moore!

RAND. Tell him you have withdrawn your prosecution.

TOM. Good God, Rand, do you know what you are asking?

RAND. Perfectly.

TOM. Oh, I can't do it, Rand, I can't.

RAND. For my sake.

TOM. That man killed my brother. I have sworn to see him punished. I'll do it, so help me—

RAND. Tom! Don't say it old man, don't say it.

TOM. Ask me anything else but that, Rand, anything.

RAND. Let me show you where—

TOM. No, Cedric. No. I made a vow to my dead brother and I mean to keep it. Understand me, I mean to keep it.

RAND. But your promise to me.

TOM. Please, Rand, don't say anything about that. Think of my brother.

RAND. Haven't I been a brother to you, Tom?

TOM. That's enough. I'll do it.

RAND (*takes him by the hand*). I knew you would, old man, I knew you would. (TOM goes to desk, sits and writes)

ENTER BISHOP D. L. *Speaks to RAND aside.*

BISHOP. There is a lady down stairs to see you, sir.

RAND. Show her in when Mr. Starkie leaves, Bishop.

BISHOP. Yes, sir.

TOM (*hands RAND a letter*). Here you are, Ced. This is for your sake. We will never say a word about this again.

RAND. Never a word if you do not wish it. This is not

[EXIT D. L.]

going to make any difference between you and me, is it, Tom?

TOM (*shaking him by the hand*). Only to make us better friends than ever.

RAND. I will see that you never regret this. I have a caller, Tom. You will excuse me, I know.

TOM. Of course, old man.

RAND. You will pardon me if I turn down the lamp. (*Does so*)

TOM. Certainly! (*All lights go out but the lamp*) Good night. [*EXIT D. L.*

ENTER ALASKA D. L. *Crosses r.* RAND turns up lamp.
Lights half up.

ALASKA. You have succeeded?

RAND. You have come.

ALASKA. You have succeeded?

RAND. Yes.

ALASKA. The letter.

RAND. Here.

ALASKA. Oh give it to me. Give it to me, please.

RAND. And your promise?

ALASKA. My husband's safety comes first.

RAND. Do you love him as much as that Alaska?

ALASKA. Love him. If you only knew how much.

RAND. But your promise to go with me.

ALASKA. Give me the letter please.

RAND. Here. (*Hands her the letter*)

ALASKA. And now let me go to my husband.

RAND. One moment. (*He locks the door and puts the key in his pocket*) Alaska I love you, you know that. To-night you made me a promise. I have fulfilled my part and I am base enough, low enough if you will, to hold you to yours.

ALASKA. Ced, think, you are a man, think of the old life, think—

RAND. I can think of nothing save that you are here.

ALASKA. Cedric. Please.

RAND. Alaska, you don't know how I have hungered for a sight of you all these years. You loved me once, you will do so again. You are here alone, with me, you are mine. (*Takes her forcibly in his arms*)

ALASKA. Cedric, remember I—I—

RAND. I remember nothing.

ALASKA. If not for my sake, for your mother's. Remember this is her home. (RAND releases her. *Her cloak drops to the floor*) Oh, I know, Cedric, it must be hard for you, old friend. But what can I do? As you love me so do I love my husband. Even now after all this, I find that I can esteem you as one of the few men who can be a real friend. Come old friend, give me the key and let me go.

RAND. Then I can never have any hope?

ALASKA. Never.

RAND (*goes to door, unlocks it*). Go. Go quickly please. (A knock comes to d. l.) Is that you, Bishop?

JACK. No, it is I. Moore.

ALASKA. My husband.

RAND. Quick, the curtains. (ALASKA conceals herself behind curtains d. r. c.)

RAND (*gulps down a drink of whiskey*). Come in.

ENTER JACK D. L.

JACK. Am I disturbing you?

RAND. Not at all.

JACK. I could not sleep and I did not wish to disturb my wife, so I came to you to ask your advice as to the best manner for me to proceed in this matter. I think you are one of my new friends. (*Holds out his hand*. RAND reluctantly takes it) Thanks—Thanks. (JACK sees cloak on floor. He picks it up and starts)

ENTER MRS. RAND D. L. C.

RAND (*goes to his mother. Aside*). Mother, get him away from here.

MRS. RAND. Why?

RAND. His wife is here.

MRS. RAND. God.

JACK (*to RAND*). Has my wife been here since we left together.

RAND. No.

JACK. Then what is her cloak doing here?

MRS. RAND. That is mine, Dr Moore. You see they are alike.

JACK. I beg your pardon. (*He is about to hand her the cloak*) One moment. (*He examines the cloak—then to RAND*) You have lied to me. My wife's monogram is on this cloak. She is here and I shall find her.

ENTER ALASKA *from behind curtains.*

ALASKA. Jack.

JACK. You.

ALASKA. Yes. Please take me home.

JACK. You here and alone.

ALASKA. I came to save you. See I have—

JACK. You came here alone, that is enough. Oh, I should have known it. It is in your blood. It is the Indian strain. (To RAND) As for you I suppose I should kill you, and I will. We shall meet again.

RAND. As you please.

ALASKA. Jack, Jack, it is for my love that I came here.

JACK. Your love. I can believe now that it never existed. You have all lied to me. My wife more so than the rest. She has lived a lie all these years.

ALASKA. Jack, I love you. You don't understand. Let me explain.

JACK. I want no explanation. You have brought your love here. Now stay here with it together with your shame. Good-night. [EXIT D. L.

ALASKA. Jack, Jack. (Falls to sitting position on floor beside table, her head buried in her arms)

RAND. Mother, take care of her.

[EXIT D. R. with lowered head.

MRS. RAND. Alaska.

ALASKA. Leave me for a few moments, please.

MRS. RAND. As you will. (EXIT D. R. The curtains at D. R. C. slowly part and CROSS FOX appears in doorway. He comes down slowly)

CROSS FOX. 'Laska.

ALASKA (looks up and starts). You—You. Father. How came you here?

CROSS FOX. Me here with big show. Me see Rand. Me trail. See him come here. Me wait. Me see you come here. Me watch. Me see you there. (Points to balcony) Me climb up. Me find you. (He staggers and drops to couch)

ALASKA. You are ill.

CROSS FOX. Ugh. Me sick. Drink much fire water. Get in big fight. See? (He bares his breast and shows ugly cut)

ALASKA. I'll send for a doctor.

CROSS FOX. No! Ugh. Medicine man do no good. Me soon go to happy hunting grounds. Me want to say much. Ugh. Much hurt. (Puts his hand on his breast) You

know. Me want you much happy. You Doc. Moore squaw. Me want him happy. Me soon see Great Spirit, then me happy. First me speak all. Me kill Joe Starkie.

ALASKA. You, father?

CROSS FOX. Ugh. Me! Quick say good-bye like white man. Quick, me go. Great Spirit call.

ALASKA. Father, my father. (*She kisses him*)

CROSS FOX. Ugh. Now me go happy. (*Falls back on couch. ALASKA goes up to D. R. and calls off softly*)

ALASKA. Mrs. Rand. (MRS. RAND ENTERS D. R. ALASKA goes to CROSS FOX) Father—Father, say again. Father, speak about Doc. Moore.

CROSS FOX. Me kill Joe Starkie. Doc. Moore, him no do it. Him drunk, him crazy. Me tell him, him do it, him believe. See. (*He goes through the same movements as in second act when he killed JOE STARKIE*) Doc. Moore him here, him sleep. Joe Starkie, him here. Me hate him. Me take Doc. Moore knife. See. (*He goes through business of killing JOE, and placing knife beside JACK*) Jack, him wake. Him crazy. Me say you kill Joe. Him cry like squaw. See. Much snow, Ugh. Me read stars. No cry. Come Doc. outside, dogs, sleigh. Me take you south. Laska love you like flower love sun. When you no come she die. Come, much happy. Come, Laska, she wait. Not your fault I swear by Great Spirit. (*He falls to couch*) Laska me kill Joe. Say good-bye, like white man.

ALASKA. Father—Father. (*She kisses him*)

CROSS FOX. See much sunset on snow. Hark wind. See—See. Great Chiefs. Ugh, me come, Ugh, me come. Laska say good-bye, like white man. (*He falls back dead*)

ALASKA. Dead. My father dead. (*She goes to the mantel, takes down flowers and lays them on his breast. EXIT MRS. RAND D. R. ALASKA stands behind couch*) Alone—Alone. The last of a great race. The curse of the Beothics has fallen. I am the last of my race, shunned by mankind and left deserted and alone. Oh, Great Spirit of my people look down on me and help me. It is the last daughter of your race who speaks. Oh, Great Spirit. Oh help me and take me to the land of my fathers. (*With arms upraised and spread in Indian supplication*)

CURTAIN.

ACT IV.

SCENE.—*Same as Act III. Summer afternoon. A white flood-light replaces blue light, back of double doors. At rise DISCOVERED Tom lighting a cigar at buffet. Bell rings off L. ENTER BISHOP D. R.*

BISHOP. Mr Rand will see you in a few minutes sir.

TOM. Tell him not to hurry on my account. I will smoke a cigar on the balcony.

BISHOP. Yes, sir. Very good, sir. (EXITS D. L. TOM goes out on balcony and EXITS D. R. C. ENTER BISHOP D. L. followed by HELEN) I will tell Mr. Rand you are here, Miss. (EXITS D. R.

ENTER SEERS D. L. *all out of breath.*

SEERS. My dear child. Why will you insist upon running upstairs? You know it is quite impossible for me to follow you, I declare I am all out of breath. (Sits R. and mops his forehead)

HELEN. I did it to punish you for insisting that I call here with you. Why did you do it?

SEERS. For reasons which you are not to know.

HELEN. But why?

SEERS. Because.

HELEN. Pshaw. That's a woman's reason.

SEERS. Therefore you can better understand it.

HELEN. Now that we are here, what shall we do. (She goes about examining furniture, etc.)

SEERS. We shall wait for one thing. I came here to see Cedric.

HELEN. What for?

SEERS. Helen, will you please sit down and stop that prying about? Pray remember we are here as callers, not as second hand furniture buyers. You positively make me nervous, you really do.

HELEN. Papa, am I the only one who makes you nervous?

SEERS. Eh, why do you ask that?

HELEN. I don't know, only you act the same way in Mrs. Rand's presence.

SEERS. Helen, for a young girl of your age you are altogether too—too—too, I was going to say impudent.

HELEN. And you meant observing.

SEERS. I meant nothing of the sort.

HELEN. That's a pretty rose you have in your coat, Papa.

SEERS. Do you really think so, my dear?

HELEN. Yes, and Mrs. Rand is so fond of roses.

SEERS. Helen, will you please keep quiet?

HELEN. Papa, I am worried about you. Upon my word you are so nervous that one would think you really were in love with Mrs. Rand.

SEERS. Who told you that?

HELEN (*surprised*). Why, Papa.

SEERS. There, there, I'm getting quite warm. This room is over heated. Helen, please take a walk on the balcony and cool yourself off.

HELEN. I'm quite comfortable here, Papa.

SEERS. Will you do as I bid you?

HELEN. Yes, Papa. I have some purchases to make and will walk across the park to the shops. (*Goes to D. L.*) And, Papa—

SEERS. Well what is it?

HELEN. I hope she will make you a good wife.

[*EXIT laughing D. L.*

SEERS. Damn it. There, that girl has made me lose my temper to say nothing of my equilibrium. I feel that I am quite upset.

ENTER RAND D. R.

RAND. Good afternoon, Mr. Seers.

SEERS. Cedric, my dear boy, I am delighted to see you. (*Takes RAND by the hand*)

RAND. I am sorry I have kept you waiting.

SEERS. Don't mention it, dear boy. Don't say a word about it. I have come this afternoon, Cedric, to talk with you upon a matter of great importance.

RAND. Won't you be seated?

SEERS. Thank you. (*Sits L. and RAND sits R.*) My boy, have you ever thought of getting married.

RAND. I have always understood that it is a holy institution, and a good thing for both man and woman.

SEERS. It is a grand thing, my boy. No family should be without it.

RAND. Eh.

SEERS. I mean that every man should take a wife. It is a comfort and a blessing that God intended we poor mortals should all enjoy.

RAND. Do you say this because you have been married?

SEERS. Yes, and because I wish to marry again.

RAND. Again? I congratulate you.

SEERS. But you do not ask me who the lady is.

RAND. Would you care to tell me?

SEERS. It is for that very reason that I called upon you. Cedric, I have had the honor to ask your mother to become my wife.

RAND. My mother?

SEERS. You are surprised.

RAND. I must confess that I am somewhat.

SEERS. You are displeased?

RAND. Quite the contrary.

SEERS. I am indeed glad to hear that. Now, all that is needed is your consent.

RAND. My consent did you say?

SEERS. Indeed, yes. Your mother informed me that I would have to secure that before she would give me a decisive answer.

RAND. Mr. Seers, my happiness now only lies in the happiness of my mother. I offer you my hand and with it my heart-felt wishes that you may both partake of all of this life's blessings. You are taking a woman, sir, of whose kind God placed only two upon this earth. (SEERS takes him by the hand)

SEERS. Thank you, my boy. Thank you.

RAND. Would you care to step into my room, Mr.—Now that you are to be my father, what shall I call you?

SEERS. Call me—Let me see—Call me Governor.

RAND. Governor.

SEERS. By Heaven, that sounds mighty good to me.

[EXIT RAND D. R. followed by SEERS

ENTER HELEN D. L. and TOM D. R. C.

HELEN. Oh, I beg your pardon.

TOM. It is I who should apologize for frightening you.

HELEN. You didn't frighten me.

TOM. No?

HELEN. No. I was surprised to see you that was all.

TOM. And disappointed?

HELEN. No, just surprised. I understood you were out of town.

TOM. I was going up to shoot at the VanCurlers but I have so few friends in that set I was afraid the hunting would lack sociability, so I remained at home.

HELEN. You seem to have so few friends anywhere. Do you know, Mr. Starkie, you strike me as being a lonesome sort of a man.

TOM. I am sometimes.

HELEN. I should think that you would have your relations continually about you.

TOM. I have none.

HELEN. None at all?

TOM. My brother Joe was killed up north. And when I returned home I found that my mother had preceeded him on the lonely trail.

HELEN. I am sorry that I brought up so a painful a subject.

TOM. Of course I know you didn't do it in the spirit of gossip. Come, let us sit here and talk on less painful subjects. (*They sit on couch L.*)

HELEN. Very well, what shall we talk about?

TOM. I'm sure I don't know.

HELEN. Surely we cannot sit here like two wallflowers and say nothing.

TOM. Miss Seers, if the opportunity presented itself to you to do a great Christian and charitable act I don't think you would refuse, would you.

HELEN. Why, of course not.

TOM. You know the years that I have spent up north have blunted my refinement and proper speech, so if what I am going to say is not couched in proper terms you will pardon me, won't you?

HELEN. Certainly. Whose throat is it that you want me to cut.

TOM. Eh.

HELEN. I haven't the faintest idea what you are about to say. But if it is anything like your manner it must be a deep-dyed plot for a murder or something equally as pleasant.

TOM (*laughs*). It is not quite as bad as that but almost.

HELEN. Then please do not keep me in suspense.

TOM. I won't. You see you're the best girl I ever met

and a prince of good fellows and all that sort of thing and as I said before I wanted you to do a great Christian act. Will you make yourself miserable for the rest of your life? (Aside) Thank Heaven I have proposed at last.

HELEN. Mr. Starkie. How long have you felt this way?

TOM. I beg your pardon.

HELEN. Really, I am willing to make myself miserable or anything else that you might desire. If you will only tell me how.

TOM. Why, by marrying me.

HELEN. Is this a proposal?

TOM. What did you think it was?

HELEN. You haven't given me time to think.

TOM. And you haven't given me an answer yet.

HELEN. You are original to say the least.

TOM. Helen, I love you. But then you're a woman and probably knew that before I did myself.

HELEN. You are really refreshing.

TOM. I am glad there is something about me that you fancy.

HELEN. And you love me?

TOM. From the first day I saw you. (HELEN sighs) Do you feel as bad as all that about it?

HELEN. It is not that. I really don't know what to say. It is all so strange.

TOM. Strange?

HELEN. Yes, strange that I love you and you love me.

TOM (*delighted*). You love me?

HELEN. From the first day I saw you.

TOM (*holds out his arms*). Helen.

HELEN. Tom. (*They embrace*)

TOM. Oh, if I could only give one loud yell.

HELEN. I feel the same way.

TOM. Say, let's yell together.

SEERS (*off stage r.*). Very well, Cedric, in the morning at ten. Now mark you, be on time.

RAND (*off stage r.*). I shall.

HELEN (*startled*). Here comes Papa.

TOM (*same business*). Wa—wa—what shall I do?

HELEN. Hold me tighter. (TOM *hugs her closer*. SEERS ENTERS r. *chuckling to himself*. He sees TOM and HELEN and immediately his manner changes)

SEERS. Helen! Upon my soul. What are you doing?

HELEN. Nothing, Papa. Tom is doing it all.

SEERS. And you, sir. Never in all my life—How the devil dare you, sir?

HELEN. Don't you run away, Tom.

TOM. I won't.

HELEN. Hold me closer.

TOM. With pleasure.

SEERS. What is this all about, sir. Do you realize that you are hugging my daughter in the most unbecoming fashion and right before her father's eyes.

TOM. Am I? How strange. I never noticed it?

SEERS. God bless my soul. Are you trying to make a fool of me?

HELEN. Papa, we are engaged.

SEERS. You are what?

TOM. We are engaged to be married.

SEERS. My consent is necessary to further any such procedure.

TOM. But I don't intend to marry you, Mr. Seers.

SEERS. By General Jackson and New Orleans I warn you to be careful young man, I am losing my temper. Helen!

HELEN. Rising.—Yes, Papa.

SEERS. Come with me. (Goes to d. l.)

HELEN. Yes, sir. (She follows him. TOM goes to door leading on balcony. SEERS is arranging his somewhat ruffled dress, he does not notice HELEN and TOM, who are throwing kisses to each other. He turns and catches them in the act)

SEERS. Helen!

HELEN. Yes, Papa.

SEERS. My arm. (She takes his arm) Mr. Starkie.

TOM. Your honor.

SEERS. Good afternoon.

HELEN. Papa, wouldn't it be funny if both our marriages took place on the same day?

SEERS. Come at once. (HELEN laughs. He almost drags her off d. l.)

ENTER RAND D. R.

RAND. Good morning, Tom.

TOM. Hello, Rand. Excuse me for a moment, will you? I'm going to be married.

RAND. You are what?

TOM. Not now of course. I'll tell you all about it later. (He goes out on the balcony and off l. The bell rings off l.)

ENTER BISHOP D. R. and crosses to L.

RAND. Bishop, were there any letters for me in the last mail?

BISHOP. One, sir, was brought by Mr. Moore's servant. It is on the table.

RAND. That will do Bishop, thank you. You can answer the bell.

BISHOP. Very good, sir. (BISHOP EXITS D. L. RAND picks up letter from the table and reads—He starts—crushes up the letter and sinks in the chair L. of table. ENTER BISHOP D. L.) Mr. Moore, sir—

ENTER JACK D. L. *He is somewhat disheveled and care-worn.* EXIT BISHOP D. R. RAND rises.

JACK. You got my letter.

RAND. I have just read it.

JACK. You have decided?

RAND. Yes, that you are mistaken.

JACK. I see. Then you are coward enough to deny me the only manly atonement you might have offered.

RAND. There again you are mistaken.

JACK. You accept?

RAND. On conditions.

JACK. There is only one course for you to take and that allows no conditions.

RAND. Very well, then, I am ready. (JACK crosses to behind table R. He takes out two revolvers which he lays on table)

JACK. Your choice. (RAND without looking at them touches one. JACK takes the other and goes back L.) Your clock is now five minutes to four. We will stand back to back and at the last stroke of the hour we will turn and fire. Is it agreed?

RAND. Yes, but before we go on with this I have something to say to you.

JACK. I will hear nothing.

RAND. Do you fully realize the consequences of this action, no matter how fate decides it?

JACK. I have thought and I am prepared for the worst. My home has been destroyed. My wife to me is a stranger and you are the cause. There is but one way in which I can get but faint satisfaction and I have chosen that way. If you are a man you will accept.

RAND. You do not seem to comprehend me or will not. It is not fear that prompts my speaking, rather I am pleased, I know there is but one way to set this whole affair right and I meet it gladly. But your wife—

JACK. Kindly refrain from bringing her name into this.

RAND. You will pardon me but I really must. You forget that but for her and hers you would not be here.

JACK. You refer to her saving my life up north when I was suspected of being a road agent. By now you must know or have very good grounds for suspicion that I was the highwayman. What I did up there was from the spirit of adventure not from malice or for gain. I never harmed a soul and those that I took from, have received over twice the amount they lost. As for Mr. Starkie's brother, when that terrible deed was committed I was mad with the fever.

RAND. Then you have not heard—

JACK. I have heard nothing, nor do I care to. Come, we have but two minutes.

RAND. Then in those two minutes let me at least vindicate the character of your wife. Moore, she is as pure and innocent as the first day you met her.

JACK. I cannot believe you. (RAND sits at the table and writes)

RAND. Moore, in a few seconds I will be no more, of that I am positive. I have written here that I have taken my own life, that will insure your safety. Now will you let me explain?

JACK. It is time. Are you ready?

RAND. Yes, for I have done my best. (He rises. They stand back to back. RAND is R., JACK is L. The clock strikes the hour. At the second stroke TOM ENTERS from the balcony. At the third stroke he is down c. RAND and JACK turn to fire. RAND does not raise his revolver. JACK and RAND are both startled and surprised)

JACK. You?

TOM. Yes.

JACK. Will you kindly step out of the way?

TOM. I will not.

RAND. Kindly leave us, Tom.

TOM. I am sorry, but I must refuse.

JACK. Perhaps you do not realize what you are doing.

TOM. It is evident to me that both you gentlemen fail to remember that you are living in the 20th century.

JACK. This affair has to do only with Mr. Rand and myself.

TOM. There is reason in all things.

JACK. Not in this.

TOM. Yes, even in this. Perhaps you forget that up to a few hours ago I thought you guilty of my brother's death. I had sworn to be revenged upon you, yet before I knew you were innocent, I found it in my heart to forgive you and thus give up the sole object of my existence. You have not been in town and therefore do not know that Cross Fox—

JACK. Will you please stand out of the way?

TOM. I repeat that I will not.

JACK. Then take the consequences. When I count three I shall fire. One—Two—

ENTER ALASKA D. L. *followed by MRS. RAND.*

ALASKA. Jack.

JACK (*lowers his gun*). Alaska.

ALASKA (*speaks quietly, almost in a whisper*). Has there not been enough blood shed, why must there be more? He did wrong, you are mistaken, I am to blame and my father was the cause.

JACK. I don't understand.

ALASKA. He died in this room a few days ago confessing that he killed Joe Starkie.

JACK. I—

ALASKA (*to RAND*). Will you tell him the truth?

RAND. Yes. Moore, you know what I thought of Alaska up in that north country, you know that I loved her and until you came, I was at least the favored one. Like the rest of the boys I thought you killed Joe Starkie and when I returned home and found that you had married the woman I loved, I was fool enough to think that I might win her at the price of your safety. I prevailed upon Tom Starkie to write a letter, recalling all charges against you and to abandon all hopes of having you arrested. It was at my suggestion that your wife came to my room to receive the letter that would save you. I don't know what she said to me except to show me what a base creature I was. She was just leaving the room as you came in. There are some things in this world that are considered terrible when they are pitiful, how pitiful Heaven alone knows, and this is one of them.

ALASKA (*to JACK*). You have heard the truth.

JACK. Alaska, I have wronged you even beyond insult. Dare I hope to have you forgive me and to take me home again.

ALASKA. Jack. (*She holds out both her hands to him. He takes them in his own, kisses them and folds her in his arms. Together they walk to D. L. At the door ALASKA turns to MRS. RAND. She speaks aside*) Tell him that I forgive him and that I said good-bye. (*She EXITS with JACK D. L. TOM comes down and takes RAND by the hand*)

TOM. Pal.

RAND. Tom.

TOM. I'm sorry, old man.

RAND. Thank you.

TOM. Take my advice, get away, try to forget.

RAND (*smiles sadly*). Try to forget? Yes (*Tom shakes him by the hand again, then goes up and speaks to MRS. RAND aside*)

TOM. You can be his only comfort now. I am thankful for his sake that you are his mother. (*He kisses the hand and exits D. L. RAND thinking they have all gone notices the revolver on the table and slowly raises it to his temple. During the business MRS. RAND is slowly coming toward him. She lays her hand gently on his arm and speaks in a whisper*)

MRS. RAND. Cedric.

RAND (*folds his mother in his arms and buries his face on her shoulder*). Mother—Mother—Mother.

MRS. RAND. My boy, dare I trust you?

RAND. For your sake, mother, yes.

MRS. RAND. Hold me closer, Cedric, and call me mother just as you did when a boy. I understood all your sorrows then, I understand them now.

RAND. Mother, my mother. (*He kisses her*)

MRS. RAND. My boy. (*With bowed head EXITS D. L.*)

RAND. Tom was right. I must forget. Forget? Will I ever forget. (*He pulls bell cord. Then sits L. of table, his elbow on the table, his head resting on his hand*)

ENTER BISHOP D. R.

BISHOP. Did you ring, sir?

RAND (*without turning around*). Is that you, Bishop?

BISHOP. Yes, sir.

RAND. Bishop, I want you to pack up, I am going away.

BISHOP. Do you go alone, sir?

RAND. Yes.

BISHOP. May I ask where to sir?

RAND. Back to the land of forgotten pasts. Back on the
Frozen Trail. (*He drops his head in his arm across the
table. BISHOP stands c. with bowed head*)

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